The Newsletter of the Lincoln Middle School Dungeons & Dragons Club

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The club's membership continues to increase. This pleases me greatly. Despite the distance between us, we are united by our passion for polyhedra, graph paper and miniatures. We even have a new Certified DM. Matt F. sent in his DM test and he passed with flying colors. Congratulations, Matt!

Speaking of talented Dungeon Masters named Matt, club vice president, Matt B., has written an article on magic swords for this issue. It's an enjoyable read and perhaps it can find a use in your own campaign. The article will be presented to the Council of Dungeon Masters to determine if it will become official club material.

See you next issue,

Christian

Magic Swords: a sum of parts

by Matt Borselli, vice president of the LMS D&D Club

Many times in RPGs, an adventurer finds a +1 magic sword and promptly chucks his old sword away. This is sad, as that old sword has carried him through many early battles and victories. What was the history of that mundane sword?

What if his parents, poor farmers, had saved up money, scrimped and saved, to buy this weapon for their child? Was the adventurer using an old blade once owned by a father or an older ancestor, with histories all its own? Did he receive it from a well-beloved mentor? It's a tragedy to let that weapon fall to the wayside without more than a thought.

But in the game, these considerations don't matter in the rush for more and better magic weapons, because soon, the +1 sword will disappear for the +2 and so on. And as the adventurer gains in skill, he'll need weapons that can strike creatures only damaged by magic. To stay true to the story of the character or to maximize the weapon potential? We all know which one wins out. I propose a different path, one that allows a hero to keep his beloved weapon and improve it during play from treasure hoards and skilled enemies that have fallen to his blade.

See, swords are a sum of parts. They are made up of a hilt and a blade. The hilt has a pommel, grip and crossguard. Sometimes they have a rain guard (added to the crossguard to prevent rain from getting into the scabbard) and a sword knot (also known as a tassel, attached to the pommel or crossguard). The blade has several sections as well, not individual parts but important nonetheless, the tang, fuller, edge, central ridge and point.

Since it is expensive to enchant a whole weapon, most wizards just enchant one or a few parts of the sword, enough to affect the whole weapon. An enchanted grip preventing the wielder from being disarmed, or a wolf-shaped pommel allowing additional damage against wolves might be found by characters. A holy blade made with the hair of a saint or a crossguard adding to defense are other kinds of enchanted parts. It is possible to move parts around to other swords, but each sword can only hold so many enchanted parts before they are "full."

A sword has 5 enchantment slots that can be filled, be that with a positive modifier or a special effect. For example, a +1 flaming sword is considered a 2 slot weapon, the same as a +2 sword. Both have only 3 more slots to fill, after that, they've reached their maximum and can no longer be modified.

But what about cursed swords, that staple of fantasy role-playing? They follow the same rules,

but their curse cannot be removed from the sword, nor can any other part be removed once it is added. So a -1 cursed sword can be modified to a -2 cursed sword or a -1 flaming cursed sword. The flaming aspect doesn't change the -1 modifier or the cursed aspect. So it is possible to have a +1 vs. undead sword that that is cursed to attract undead.

Positive (and negative) modifiers stack, so adding a +1 modifier part to a +1 sword makes it a +2 sword. However, adding a +1 modifier to a -1 cursed sword does not remove the curse - it becomes a -2 cursed sword and forever changes the +1 part (which cannot be removed).

Most parts can be incorporated into an existing weapon fairly easily. A sword knot can be added in a few minutes to a sword, while it can take up to a half-hour to switch out a pommel, crossguard or grip, given the correct tools and time to do it. For the blade section, it is in the shape of a small replica of the enchanted part, usually no longer than 10 inches. These blade sections, however, take an additional step to incorporate into the sword.

Because blades are tempered in forges, it is necessary to use a sympathetic ritual to add a blade section to a sword blade. At the least, a wooden mallet, a campfire and an "anvil" are necessary. The campfire is used to heat the receiving sword blade and the enchanted blade section is lain on top of the warmed sword. Then the mallet and "anvil" are used to merge the two together. A wizard, dwarf or elf knows how to perform this ritual innately but once one ritual has been observed, then any class/race can do it. The amount of time is required to perform this ritual is up to the GM, but it should take at least an hour.

Outlined in the tables below are some ideas for magic parts. The enchanted part may have elaborate carving or inscription that matches its function (a skull pommel to denote an undead bane, or a celtic knotwork crossguard to denote protection).

Table I: Magic Sword Modifier, Roll 1d6

1. +1 to hit/damage (or +1 to AC for crossguard)
2. +1 vs. animal (GMs choice)
3. +1 vs. monster (GMs choice)
4. special attack (see Table III)
5. special effect (see Table IV)
6. cursed weapon (see Table V)

Table II: Magic Sword Part, Roll 1d6

1. Blade (see Table VI)
2. Pommel
3. Grip
4. Crossguard
5. Crossguard/Rainguard
6. Sword Knot

Table III: Special Attack, Roll 1d6

1. +1 vs. demons
2. +1 vs. devils
3. +1 vs. undead
4. +1 vs. unicorns
5. +1 vs. dragons
6. +1 vs. angels

Table IV: Special Effect, Roll 1d6

1. flaming weapon
2. vampiric
3. luck (1d3 wishes)
4. +0 weapon (it's magical but doesn't improve the attack)
5. regeneration
6. cold weapon

Table V: Cursed Weapon, Roll 1d6

1. -1 weapon
2. berserker
3. backbiting
4. -2 weapon
5. delusion
6. reduces intelligence to 3

Table VI: Blade Sections, Roll 1d6

1. Tang
2. Fuller
3. Edge
4. Central ridge
5. Point
6. GM’s choice